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ABSTRACT

A feasibility study was made of the Gallup/Kettering plan for support in locally conducted surveys of public opinion about the public schools by implementing the plan in Richmond, Virginia. The methods used in the local survey, as well as the findings and conclusions of the feasibility study, are reported in this document. A related document is ED 046 097. (Author)

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF ADAPTING THE GALLUP/ C. F. KETTERING MODEL FOR SURVEYING PUBLIC OPINION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR SURVEYS IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken with the beliefs that school officials could and should conduct their own local surveys of public opinion and that the Gallup/Kettering Survey Plan offered an excellent opportunity for local officials to develop such programs. Public schools are owned by the public, financed by tax funds, and operated to serve certain educational needs of society. Locally, the people of the community, the school board, the school administrators, the school faculties and the students are all involved in the venture. Each has a share in the total responsibility to support the public schools and each has an opportunity to influence the quality of education for good or for bad.

The development of a base of information upon which common understandings of the knowledges, attitudes, and aspirations of <u>all</u> of the above groups could be established and maintained is an essential element to the optimum effectiveness of the public schools. The Gallup/Kettering Survey Plan was addressed to only one feature of this "all encompassing" concept in that it was designed as a means by which school boards and school administrators could assess the desires, attitudes, and knowledges of the public with respect to the public schools and the educational processes. This study was confined to these parameters,

although it will be recognized that the other relationships exist and need to be addressed also. (Note: the third annual survey by Gallup did include a sample from junior and senior high school students.)

The officials of the C. F. Kettering Foundation of Denver, Colorado, recognized that systematic methods of achieving two-way communication between local school personnel and their respective communities were necessary for viable school-community relations. The concept of public ownership of the public schools implied that the public know the schools and be prepared to discharge its responsibilities to the schools effectively and knowledgeably. Conversely, the concept also implied that school boards and school administrators know the aspirations and attitudes of the <u>total</u> community within which the respective public schools function.

<u>Total</u> community is emphasized because school personnel need to know the aspirations and attitudes of <u>all</u> of the population or a truly representative sample of all of the population, and not merely the ideas of a few articulate individuals. Demands for action which are made by individuals and pressure groups to school boards and administrators can be better understood and evaluated as to validity, urgency, intensity, and political motivation if they can be viewed within the perspective of the attitudes and opinions of the entire community. The sample-survey method of obtaining desired information about the public's views toward the public schools was chosen by the Kettering Foundation as a means of helping local school officials accomplish this task.

C. F. Kettering, Ltd., commissioned Gallup International, Incorporated, the well-known opinion polling agency, to conduct an annual national survey on HOW THE NATION VIEWS THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. It was intended that local school officials, by following a simple plan for

surveying their own community, would be enabled to conduct their own surveys and make comparisons with the results of the national study, year after year. The first annual national survey was accomplished and reported in 1969. (See Bibliography: Gallup, George, How the Nation Views the Public Schools.) The baseline data provided in the initial survey served two primary purposes: (1) benchmarks were set to enable change to be measured in the years ahead; and (2) local communities were provided with norms for comparative purposes.

The report of the first annual national survey by Gallup contained the following statement which explains the nature of the survey:

> The attitude of the public toward two types of educational issues will be surveyed annually. The continuing educational questions constitute one type for which the yearly surveys will provide a longitudinal study of historical value. Objectives of schooling and the cost of education are among issues in this category. A second type of educational question to be surveyed is that which changes from year to year. Current important ones of this nature are narcotics, sex education, taxpayer revolt, student unrest, and curriculum relevancy.

The second and third annual national surveys were reported in the Phi Delta Kappan, respectively in the October, 1970, and September, 1971 issues.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The problem was that of adapting a national survey model, as developed by Gallup International, Incorporated, with its trained staff, to a local survey model which was to be planned and conducted by uninitiated and untrained personnel. The structure of the survey design had to be simple enough to be managed by local school personnel, yet sophisticated enough to give results which could be accepted with some degree of confidence.

The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of adapting the Gallup/Kettering national survey model to a locally conducted survey of the views and attitudes which citizens held with respect to their public schools. A modified replication of the first annual survey was designed and conducted in Richmond, Virginia, to test the strategy of the Kettering plan. The procedures are summarized in this report with the hope that this description of the significant aspects of the local study will provide some ideas upon which any local school system could design its own survey.

The findings were analyzed in three ways to serve the following purposes:

(1) To make an assessment of the unique characteristics of the local citizens' knowledge and attitudes concerning their public schools in the following categories:

   (a) The state of information about local schools and education

   (b) Communication with the public

   (c) The major complaints

   (d) Attitudes toward teaching and teachers

   (e) Attitudes toward school boards and their problems

   (f) Citizen participation

   (g) Financial support

(2) To make comparisons with the Gallup/Kettering survey, national norms, and

(3) To determine the feasibility of the Gallup/Kettering model for local studies of public perception of the public schools using the following criteria:

   (a) Cost and ease of administration

   (b) Ease of analyzing the data

(c) Validity and reliability of results

(d) Potential value of results to local school district and officials

THE REPORT

The remainder of this report sketches the approach which was taken in the local study being described. Chapter 2 contains the plan or design of the survey and includes the design of the sample, method of collecting the data, and the plan for statistical analysis and interpretation of the data.

Samples of the analyses of the survey results are shown in Chapter 3 along with supplementary commentaries used in the interpretations. Chapter 4 contains the conclusions derived from the study.

Chapter 2

PLANNING THE SURVEY

Planning for the local survey involved a careful analysis of the Gallup/Kettering national survey before designing the local investigation. The research methods and techniques were then adapted to accomplish a replication of the national study within the capabilities of the resources available. This chapter outlines the design of the local survey which was used.

Research Methods and Techniques

The study was a sample-survey type research study. Survey research is based on the assumption that characteristics of populations can be determined with a high degree of accuracy through scientific selection and study of samples of the universe being investigated.

A multistage sampling plan was used to select the sample, the personal interview method was used to collect the data, and the subsequent analyses of findings of the sample were used to infer various attitudes, opinions, facts, and aspirations of all citizens of the community regarding their public schools. The interview procedure was structured in that the interview questions were taken from the first annual Gallup/Kettering Survey, "How the Nation Views the Public Schools." This made possible the comparison of local norms with national norms. The chi-square test was used to determine statistically significant differences between the results of the Gallup/Kettering Survey and the local study.

Design of the Sample

A multistage sampling design, based on the Census Tract plan, as developed by the U. S. Bureau of Census, was used in the selection of the sample. The process was as follows:

Stage 1: The city was stratified into four (4) geographical areas: north, east, south, and west.

Stage 2: Census tracts were randomly selected in each area in proportion to the total numbers of tracts. A table of random sampling numbers was used in the study. An alternate method of random selection is to put all numbers in a container, shake or stir, and pull out selected numbers, one at a time. As a number is chosen, replace it in the container so that all numbers have equal chance of being selected. If a number is chosen twice, return it to the container and choose again.

Stage 3: Twelve blocks were randomly selected in each of the census tracts which were selected in Stage 2.

State 4: One (1) household in each block selected in Stage 3 was selected systematically in which to conduct an interview. Interviews were conducted only with adults who were more than 21 years of age. The household was considered the sampling unit or cluster.

Summarized, the sample was as follows:

North - 9 census tracts - 108 households - 30%

East - 7 census tracts - 84 households - 20%

South - 6 census tracts - 72 households - 15%

West - 10 census tracts - 120 households - 35%

Totals - 32 census tracts - 384 households - 100%

It was assumed that the above stratification procedure would yield a representative sample of the population of the city. The size of the sample was set at 384 interviews which were expected to yield a ±5% reliability sample at the .05 level of confidence.

Collecting the Data

The data for the study were obtained from personal interviews with each of the respective respondents who was selected through the process of the sample plan which was described in the previous section. Five interviewers were trained to work with the investigator to accomplish the data collection phase of the project. The interview procedure was structured in that the interview questions were provided for the interviewers and instructions were given to them to ask the questions exactly as they were printed. The questions were the same as those which were reported in the Gallup/Kettering Survey.

Selection of the interviewers was based upon their personal characteristics, friendly manner, and class and ethnic status. The latter characteristics were based on research which indicated that the least bias seemed to occur when the respondent and the interviewer shared either the same social class or ethnic status, all other factors being equal.

The design of the "Interview Training Program" included the following features:

(1) General orientation of the nature of the study, objectives, and scope.

(2) Detailed orientation of the "Interview Form" and "Field Instructions".

(3) Detailed discussion of interview techniques and dangers of creating bias.

(4) Practice interviews for critique of fellow interviewers.

(5) Issue interviewer's packet which included the following: (a) General Instructions (Appendix "A"); (b) Identification Card (Appendix "B"); (c) Interviewee's Questionnaire (Appendix "C"); and, (d) Twelve (12) Interviewer's Forms (Appendix "D") with twelve (12) reference addresses for one (1) census tract.

Close supervision of the work and progress of each interviewer was maintained. The first assignment of one (1) census tract was considered a trial run and was included in the sample only after determining that the interviews had been conducted properly. Quality was controlled by inspection of the completed interview forms and discussion of the responses with the interviewer. The interviewers were required to submit the Interview Form of each census tract when completed. These were inspected before a new set of forms were issued.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

A statistical analysis of the responses reported on the interview forms was made initially. The results were then analyzed in context of patterns of responses and the supplementary comments which were recorded on the interview forms.

Statistical analysis. The compilation and statistical analysis of data from the interview forms was accomplished through the use of a computer at the University of Virginia Computer Center. Initially, the questionnaire was designed to facilitate direct tabulation by the keypunch operator. With the aid of a programmer and a keypunch operator working with the personnel at the computer center, the computer program was written in FORTRAN language, data were punched onto cards, and the computer analysis was accomplished.

The statistical analysis consisted of (1) conversion of responses to percentages, and, (2) comparison of local and national norms from the Gallup/Kettering survey, using the chi-square test of significance. The chi-square was used as the test of the validity of the null hypotheses (assumption that there is no difference) by comparing the observed data from the local study with the expected data which were obtained from the national survey with respect to each question in the interview schedule.

The chi-square test of significance was chosen because of its usefulness in evaluating experimentally determined results with results to be expected on some hypothesis. The more clearly the observed results approximated the expected results, the smaller the chi square and the closer the agreement between the observed data and the hypothesis being tested. Conversely, the larger the chi square, the greater the probability of a real divergence of experimentally observed results from the expected results.

The chi-square result for each respective comparison which was reported in this study was derived from the composite of the differences between the various responses which were included for each question. For example, if the choices of the responses were "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know," the chi-square formula included the difference between the observed result (local study) and the expected result (national study) of each response. The final chi-square result included all of the responses in the composite figure. The level of confidence which was used was the .05 level.

The chi-square result in this study implied that the difference in the observed result and the expected result could occur in several ways.

The two extremes were: (1) one particular response may have deviated from the expected response enough to make the chi-square result significant; or, (2) all of the responses may have deviated in order to make the chi-square result significant. Generally, there was a number of responses which deviated to make the chi-square result significant. Conversely, if the chi-square result was not significantly different, this implied that each individual response for a given question was not significantly different from the expected results.

Each item of the interview form was analyzed, and certain questions were analyzed in depth according to responses by sex, race, educational level, occupation, age, and income level. The findings and conclusions of the study were supported by the statistical analysis.

Interpretation of data. An interpretation of the results of the statistical analysis was made in the seven (7) categories as stated in the purpose of the study. Consideration was given to the responses of citizens on each question, supplementary information obtained by interviewers, and the results of other research in an attempt to provide a descriptive survey which would characterize the population of the local community as to the views of the citizens about their public schools.

Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research data is of little value until it can be organized in some fashion which allows for analysis and interpretation. Upon completion of the personal interviews in the local survey being described, a statistical analysis of the responses reported in the interview forms was made initially. The results were then analyzed in context of patterns of responses and the supplementary comments which were recorded on the interview forms.

Statistical Analysis.

The compilation and statistical analysis of the data from the interview forms were accomplished by computer. The computer program was developed, data punched onto cards, and the statistical analysis was done electronically. The statistical analysis consisted of (1) conversion of response frequencies to percentages, and, (2) comparison of local and national norms using the chi-square test of significance.

The responses were reported in frequencies and percentages of four parameters of the sample: (1) total sample; (2) citizens with no children in school; (3) public school parents; and, (4) non-public school parents. The following table is an example of this phase of statistical analysis. The question asked was, "Would you like to know more about the _____ Public Schools?"

Extent of the Desire of Citizens for Additional School Information

Response	Total		Citizens with no children in school		Public school parents		Non-public school parents	
	*F	**P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Yes	302	78.6	146	70.5	147	91.3	9	56.3
No	82	21.4	61	29.5	14	8.7	7	43.7
Totals	384	100.0	207	100.0	161	100.0	16	100.0

*Frequency **Percentage

Each item of the interview form was analyzed statistically in this manner and certain questions were analyzed in depth according to responses by sex, race, educational level, occupation, age, and level of income. An example follows:

Analysis of Selected Demographic Variables with Respect to the Desires of Citizens for Additional School Information

	Yes		No		Don't know/ no answer	
	*F	**P	F	P	F	P
SEX						
Men	90	78.9	24	21.1	0	0.0
Women	212	78.5	56	20.7	2	0.8
RACE						
White	145	70.4	59	28.6	2	0.9
Non-white	157	88.2	21	11.8	0	0.0

Table (continued)

	Yes		No		Don't know/ no answer	
	*F	**P	F	P	F	P
EDUCATION						
Elementary grades	62	79.5	16	20.5	0	0.0
High school incomplete	78	78.8	21	21.2	0	0.0
High school complete	80	80.8	18	18.2	1	1.0
Technical, trade, or business school	13	92.9	1	7.1	0	0.0
College incomplete	27	75.0	9	25.0	0	0.0
College graduate	42	76.4	12	21.8	1	1.8
Undesignated	0	0.0	3	100.0	0	0.0
OCCUPATION						
Business & professional	58	76.3	17	22.3	1	1.3
Clerical & sales	43	84.3	7	13.7	1	2.0
Farm	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Skilled labor	45	80.4	11	19.6	0	0.0
Unskilled labor	84	87.5	12	12.5	0	0.0
Non-labor force	70	68.6	32	31.4	0	0.0
Undesignated	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
AGE						
21 to 39 years	46	92.0	4	8.0	0	0.0
30 to 49 years	140	80.9	32	18.5	1	0.6
50 years and more	114	71.7	44	27.7	1	0.6
Undesignated	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
REGION						
North	92	85.2	15	13.9	1	0.9
East	71	84.5	13	15.4	0	0.0
South	57	79.2	15	20.8	0	0.0
West	82	68.3	37	30.8	1	0.8
INCOME						
$15,000 and more	30	69.7	13	30.2	0	0.0
$10,000 to $14,999	39	86.7	5	11.1	1	2.2
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	41	83.7	8	16.3	0	0.0
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	53	80.3	13	19.7	0	0.0
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	57	89.0	7	11.0	0	0.0
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	29	78.3	8	21.6	0	0.0
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	13	56.5	10	43.5	0	0.0
Less than $2,499	22	71.0	9	29.0	0	0.0
Undesignated	18	69.2	7	27.0	1	3.8

*Frequency **Percentage

A further analysis of the local survey data which is made possible by the annual Gallup/Kettering Survey is the comparison of the national percentages with local percentages. The following table is an illustration of this comparison. The chi-square test of significance was used in this analysis as a statistical test of the validity of the hypotheses by comparing the observed data from the local study with the expected data assumed from the national survey. The null hypotheses were used in each instance, in which it was assumed that there was no difference in the local characteristics and the national characteristics.

Comparative Data With Respect to the Desire of Citizens for Additional Information About the Schools

Response	*Percentage of totals		Citizens with no children in school		Public school parents		Non-public school parents	
	**L	***N	L	N	L	N	L	N
Yes	79%	65%	71%	55%	91%	77%	56%	74%
No	21	35	29	45	9	23	44	26
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Chi square for totals = 26.141425. This was significant at the .05 level of confidence.
**Local
***National

The local responses which were analyzed in depth on demographic bases were also compared with the national data. The following table is an illustration of this analysis:

Analysis of Selected Demographic Variables with Respect to the Comparative Data from Local and National Surveys of the Desires of Citizens for Additional School Information

	Yes		No		Don't know/ no answer	
	L	N	L	N	L	N
SEX						
Men	79%	65%	21%	34%	0%	1%
Women	79	66	21	34	*	*
RACE						
White	70	64	29	35	*	1
Non-white	88	76	12	24	0	0
EDUCATION						
Elementary grades	79	54	21	46	0	0
High school incomplete	79	66	21	34	0	*
High school graduate	81	67	18	33	1	0
Technical, trade, or business school	93	77	7	22	0	1
College incomplete	75	75	25	24	0	1
College graduate	76	62	22	37	2	1
OCCUPATION						
Business & professional	76	68	23	32	1	0
Clerical & sales	84	67	14	33	2	0
Farm	100	67	0	33	0	1
Skilled labor	80	70	20	30	0	0
Unskilled labor	88	73	13	26	0	1
Non-labor	69	45	31	54	0	1
AGE						
21 to 29 years	92	75	8	24	0	1
30 to 49 years	81	73	19	27	*	0
50 and over	72	51	28	48	*	1
INCOME						
$15,000 and more	70	63	30	36	0	1
$10,000 to $14,999	87	73	11	27	2	0
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	74	68	16	31	0	1
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	80	68	20	31	0	1
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	89	73	11	27	0	0
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	78	54	22	45	0	1
$2,500 to $ 2,999	57	51	43	49	0	0
Less than $2,499	71	45	29	54	0	1

* Less than 1%.

Interpretation of Data

Although the statistical analysis pointed up characteristics of the population, a meaningful interpretation of the data required additional insights into the responses of citizens. The interviewers reported selected comments which were made by respondents which they considered to be significant and helpful in illustrating the range of opinions expressed. The following comments were reported with respect to the question, "What kinds of information (about the public schools) would you like to have?"

> What are the problems? How well are they being solved?
>
> What are the future plans for the schools and curriculum?
>
> Why should children be bused when there is a school in the neighborhood?
>
> Why don't teachers have the right to make children behave?
>
> How much authority does a principal have in the PTA? The membership in our PTA doesn't even vote for the officers.
>
> I'm concerned about before and after school conduct of students. Are there any programs to help in this matter?
>
> . . . the school drop outs. How are they handled? Do they have good teachers in school? Do they have time for the individual child?
>
> Why are children restless and disinterested?
>
> What are the schools doing about the drug problem?
>
> What is the relationship between the students and teachers?

Single topics which respondents named to be items which they would like to know more about than they did were taken from the interview

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forms. The list included the following:

1. Schools in general
2. Curriculum
3. School problems and proposed solutions
4. Integration in the public schools
5. School rules and regulations
6. How children are taught
7. Information about the different special schools, like the new technical school
8. Pupil-teacher relationships
9. How to enroll 5-year olds
10. How parents can help children
11. Cost of schools
12. Qualifications of teachers
13. New programs like the new math

Another dimension can be added to the interpretation of data collected in the local survey. A review of related research which has been conducted for the purpose of finding true relationships with respect to the factors which could be identified in the school-community relations process and structure places the survey results in a meaningful perspective.

The questionnaire was structured into seven (7) major categories of school community relations for the investigation. These catagories were as follows: (1) State of Information About Local Schools and Education; (2) Communication With the Public; (3) Major Complaints; (4) Attitudes Toward Teaching and Teachers; (5) Attitudes Toward School Boards and Their Problems; (6) Citizen Participation; and, (7) Financial

Support. Research was reviewed in each category and is briefly summarized as follows:

State of Information About Local Schools and Education. There was general acceptance of the assumption that there was a relationship between opinions that people hold about an issue and the amount of knowledge they possessed about it. The relationship of knowledge and opinion was not clear, and one long-range study was reported as but the first step in a project designed to examine the role of knowledge in the public opinion process. It was demonstrated in the Stanford project that opinions about schools were not limited to areas in which the citizens were informed. One writer maintained that "public understanding" was made up of three essential components: public knowledge, public attitudes, and public vision.

Several questions designed to provide indicators of factual knowledge known by citizens were included in the Gallup/Kettering Survey. These concerned: (1) identities of the chairman of the school board, superintendent, and the various neighborhood principals; (2) status of classroom shortage; (3) cost per pupil for annual operation; (4) status of drop-outs; (5) percentage of graduates going to college; and, (6) various school problems.

Communication With the Public. It appeared from the literature that effective interaction between the school and society required mutual understanding, and that only through communication could this understanding be achieved. Two functions of communication which were delineated in one research project were as follows: (1) to provide descriptions of situations; and (2) to provide an exchange of information

that makes it possible for two or more persons to have the same situation in mind. It was determined from the literature that communication could be formal (within or close to the decision-making process) or informal (at a distance from the decision-making process), direct (from the schools) or indirect (through mediating agencies such as the newspapers, radio, and television.)

Major Complaints. Because public schools are public institutions, they are subject to criticism from all of society. One researcher concluded that school grievance phenomena have been viewed as a part of political life because schools touch the lives of most individuals in significant ways, because they were institutions subject to public and quasi-public control, and because they served as an intersection of private and societal needs and values. From the literature, it appeared that many complaints seemed to be trivial; however, an accumulation of grievances could evolve into a major influence in local school politics. On the other hand, redressing grievances, dealing with complaints and criticisms, and facing public concerns offered school personnel points of contact with citizens which could be used for positive gains, particularly in the areas of communication and the development of mutual understanding.

Attitudes Toward Teaching and Teachers. From the review of the literature, it appeared that the way in which a citizen viewed teaching and teachers was the result of the individual's frame of reference or orientation. Various studies were reported with respect to the way in which certain background variables affected attitudes and opinions toward teaching and teachers. Some of the variables tested were:

sex, age, parenthood, length of residence, socio-economic status, occupation, amount and type of education, home ownership, and area of residence. Also, there appeared to be a notion of a negative stereotype of the school teacher in the minds of some citizens which established a predisposition to certain attitudes toward teaching and teachers.

Against such backgrounds of predisposed ideas about teaching and teachers, there was developed a new ideological orientation in the teaching profession which emphasized greater teacher involvement in decisions about educational matters, justified on the grounds of their expertise. It was determined in the Gallup/Kettering Survey that, nationally, citizens held teaching and teachers in high esteem, and, generally, supported their efforts to exercise a greater voice in educational matters.

Attitudes Toward School Boards and Their Problems. The role of the local school board was found to be vague to the citizens in one research study. Some writers conceptualized a school board to be a mediating body between the schools and the community. Although the legal structure upon which the school board was established and was operated placed the state in control of public schools, the majority of the operational policy decisions were made locally, according to the local situation. The relationships between the local school board and the community were unique in each school district, in that policies and decisions made by the board reflected local interests and aspirations as well as state and national interests and goals.

Citizen Participation. Since the beginnings of public education, citizen participation in school activities had been broad and varied.

Individuals and organizations participated on both formal and informal bases. Participation was by direct contact with the schools or indirect contact through students or school personnel. The participating citizens were well-informed, uninformed, or misinformed, but for the most part, were well meaning.

Financial Support. Three conditions were identified as essential to adequate public school support in the research which was reported. These were as follows: (1) the expectation for service from the school must be sufficiently persuasive to receive a majority of the support of the voters; (2) a system of voting that allows the voters to express preference for the alternatives for allocation resources among the competing institutional components of the public sector; and, (3) the availability of resources. Several factors that were found to affect the attitudes of citizens with respect to their willingness to support the public schools financially were investigated in various studies. Those factors which were reported were as follows: (1) general feeling of economic pressure on citizens; (2) spiraling costs of education; (3) the social climate; (4) the size of the school district; (5) the "consumer orientation" of citizens.

The interpretations of the findings in each of the seven categories were based upon a rationale which was developed from the related literature. Subsequent summaries of the findings reflected this rationale.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study described in this report was conducted to test the strategy of the Gallup/Kettering Survey plan. The plan provided for an annual national survey of public opinion about public schools to be conducted by Gallup International,Ltd. The survey was designed so that school personnel could replicate the study on the local level.

Such a local study was designed, conducted, and reported fully in the following document:

> Gish, Elmer Hunter. "How the Citizens of Richmond, Virginia View Their Public Schools." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Virginia, 1971.

A copy may be obtained, either in hard copy or microfilm form, from the following source:

> University Microfilms
> Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

The primary purpose for the replication was to provide a local study to assess the feasibility of the Gallup/Kettering Survey plan as a systematic method of determining public opinion which could be conducted by local school personnel. The local study which was conducted assessed the knowledge, attitudes, and aspirations of a particular community, and an analysis was made as described in Chapter 3.

A comparison was made between the local and national results which served to put local characteristics in perspective with national

characteristics. Interpretations of the statistical data were made by relating the significant findings to other research and to the subjective comments of respondents as reported by the interviewers.

Feasibility Evaluations

The evaluations of the feasibility of the Gallup/Kettering Survey Plan based on the four points which were considered to test the plan are discussed below. A concluding statement is made to summarize the general conclusions of the study.

Cost and ease of administration. The local research design can be as simple or as elaborate as desired; however, if the survey is conducted as an "in house" project by a school system, the cost can be held relatively low. The initial planning for the survey sample, questionnaire (patterned to the Gallup/Kettering model), interviewer orientation, etc., can be done by school personnel. If necessary to engage interviewers, specialists such as computer programmers and key punch operators, or services such as computer time and printing of the report, the cost would depend on the individual jobs contracted. For example, five (5) interviewers were engaged to accomplish the field work of the local study being reported. They were paid $3 per interview for the 384 interviews, making a total of $1,152, plus FICA Tax Employer Contribution. It was understood that the flat fee included the requirement that the interviewer furnish his own transportation. The time per interview as reported by the interviewers was from 20 minutes to 40 minutes. The number of interviews per day ranged from 8 to 12 interviews. Under the most favorable conditions the minimum time which would be required for five (5) interviewers to accomplish the field work would be two (2) weeks. Three weeks would be more realistic.

A minimum staff for the project would be as follows:

Project Director
Statistical Clerk
Clerk-Typist
(5) Interviewers
*Computer Programmer
*Key Punch Operator

*These positions will not be necessary unless computer analysis is planned.

Additional personnel may be used in the task force. Also, in the interpretation of data stage, other regular staff members may be involved. For example, the Director of Instruction may be involved in interpreting the data related to a question concerning curriculum.

An estimation of the cost of accomplishing the Gallup/Kettering Survey Plan locally would range from $2,000 to $10,000 in cash outlay depending upon the amount of work done by school personnel and the extent to which outside personnel and services were engaged. The first survey would be the most expensive. Subsequent surveys would not require new expenditures for items such as interviewer orientation materials, possibly computer programs and other reusable materials.

Administration of the survey should not be considered to be a formidable task; however, careful and accurate records must be kept. Each step of the study should be detailed and documented.

Ease of analyzing the data. The statistical analysis of the responses as reported on the Interview Forms (Questionnaires) basically would consist of a tabulation of the frequencies of each response and computations of the resulting percentages. Further analysis could be made by applying the chi-square test of significance to determine whether or not the difference in local norms and national norms was

statistically significant when making the comparison. If further sophistication in the statistical analysis were desired, multiple regression analysis could be applied to various factors to determine significant differences. The statistical analysis desired can be readily programmed for computer operation or it can be performed manually.

The statistical analysis serves to point out facts and relationships which require interpretation within context of a comprehensive framework to be meaningful. An attempt was made in this study to use related research and subjective comments to supply this comprehensive framework.

Generally, the data was relatively simple to analyze; however, the deeper interpretation was more difficult. It is felt that school personnel would become adept at making accurate interpretations of the survey data, if the study were repeated annually for several years. For example, the project director for the survey should involve others in interpreting the statistical data. Questions dealing with curriculum and instruction should receive the attention of the Assistant Superintendent or Director of Instruction. Those dealing with student behavior may be better interpreted by school principals, teachers and students than by the project director alone, and the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs working with the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction may be able to illuminate the statistical data from the questions on accountability. The suggestion does not include the abandonment by the Project Director of his responsibility to interpret the data, merely that he involve others who are closer to the particular problems in working out the most accurate interpretation that he can.

Validity and reliability of results. The expertise of the professionals who design the Gallup/Kettering questionnaire insures a high degree of validity for the replications on the local level. It is safe to assume this, and it should be reassuring to local researchers to have the benefit of a questionnaire annually which has been tested nationally.

Reliability may be of concern, however, when results become suspect. A reason for being careful in the selection of interviewers and in their orientation and training is to try to maximize the reliability of the responses. That is to say that the interviewee's answers should be his own thoughts, not biased by the interviewer or anyone else, and insofar as possible the same responses that he would have given yesterday and will give tomorrow, given similar conditions.

If unreliable results are suspected, they may be checked by having a different interviewer revisit certain interviewees who are selected randomly or on a regular basis, i.e., each 10th or 20th person interviewed. A comparison of the results from the two interviews of the same person which shows similar responses would indicate a high degree of reliability. Dissimilar responses would indicate unreliable results. This step of checking for reliability is one which should be up to the judgment of the Project Director as to whether it is necessary or not.

Potential values of results to local school district officials. The potential values of the results of a survey of public opinion about public schools to local school district officials can only be realized through an on-going program. It is obvious that a one-time survey will have limited impact on school-community relations. The potential values

can be derived through the development of an annual survey (or at least every three years) which will afford school personnel the opportunity to perfect the survey techniques and the opportunity for the school personnel and the community to gain confidence in the survey plan.

As local researchers become proficient in the survey technique, various objectives may be served as desired. The design of the survey can be modified to focus on one or more of the following objectives, depending upon the purposes of the local study:

1. To supply essential information about the prevailing knowledges, attitudes, and aspirations of the citizens, both favorable and unfavorable, with respect to the local public schools.

2. To allow the school board and/or school administrator to see the extent of the lag between the program being proposed and the one which citizens are willing to support.

3. To inform and instruct the community on educational issues.

4. To reveal clearly defined obstacles which the school board and/or school administrator must overcome before the community will accept certain ideas and paragraphs.

5. To reveal areas of ignorance and misinformation as well as the success of the public information program.

6. To give the community a sense of sharing in current plans and solutions to problems, as well as long range goals and the plans for achieving them.

7. To find out quickly and accurately the views of any group in the community.

The real value of the survey to the local school district lies in the manner in which the results are used. Dissemination of the information must be carefully planned just as was the survey. The results can be of great benefit internally to the central administration staff and

the school board. The information from the survey which can be released to the news media can serve to bring about better public understanding of the schools and build support. Information released to advisory groups, parents' groups, professional organizations, civic groups can serve to build understanding and support. Inherent in the entire process is the sincere desire of school personnel to listen to their respective communities.

Concluding Statement

The development of this study extended over a two-year period. During this time the potential value of the strategy inherent in the Gallup/Kettering Survey Plan became increasingly apparent. It proved to be a workable technique which could be used by any and all school districts. The cost is nominal, the requirements for administration and reporting can be as simple or as elaborate as anyone wishes to make them, and the results are somewhat assured by having the Gallup/Kettering model to follow annually.

Further, it would appear that the Gallup/Kettering plan could be of great value as a stabilizing factor for school systems which are being forced to change from relatively "closed systems" to "open systems" which must be responsive to the public in a responsible manner. An annual systematic method of surveying public opinion of the entire community could aid in tranquilizing public emotional reactions, attacks by special interest groups with political motivations, and other pressure groups by providing an informational base upon which common understandings can be developed between each school system and its respective community.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

GENERAL.

The interviewer's manner should be friendly, courteous, conversational, and unbiased. He should be neither too grim nor too effusive; neither too talkative nor too timid. The idea should be to put the respondent at ease, so that he will talk freely and fully. A brief remark about the weather, the family pets, flowers, or children will often serve to break the ice. Above all, an informal, conversational interview is dependent upon a thorough mastery by the interviewer of the actual questions in the schedule. He should be familiar enough with them to ask them conversationally, rather than read them stiffly; and he should know what questions are coming next, so there will be no awkward pauses while he studies the questionnaire.

The interviewer's job is fundamentally that of a reporter, not an evangelist, a curiosity-seeker, or a debater. He should take all opinions in stride and never show surprise or disapproval of a respondent's answer. He should assume an interested manner toward his respondent's opinions and never divulge his own. If he should be asked for his views, he should laugh off the request with the remark that his job at the moment is to get opinions, not to have them.

The interviewer must keep the direction of the interview in his own hands, discouraging irrelevant conversation and endeavoring to keep the respondent on the point.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS.

The interviewer will be provided with specific addresses--one in each block randomly selected for the sample--which are to be used as a starting point for selecting the household in which to conduct the interview. This systematic selection will be made by the interviewer in the following manner:

a. Interview #1 will be conducted at the address given as the starting point (usually the SE corner house on the block). Interview #2 will be conducted in household #2--going counterclockwise around the block (#2) from the address given. Interview #3 in the third block will be conducted in the 3d household going counterclockwise from the address given, and so on until completed.

b. Apartments or multi-family households will be systematically selected in the same manner, that is, in the first apartment building, conduct the interview in Apartment #1, the second interview in Apartment #2, etc.

c. Record household number in space provided on Interview Form.

The following points are to be observed:

(1) The interview schedule is structured, with a frame of reference for succeeding questions, so it is important to ask each question exactly as it is worded. Rewording the question or explaining the question may change the frame of reference or bias the response. If the respondent fails to understand the question, repeat it slowly. If the respondent still fails to understand the question, make a note on the Interview Form and go on to the next question.

(2) Ask each question in the order that the Interview schedule states it.

(3) Attempt to get a specific, complete response as needed by the questions. People often qualify or hedge their opinions; they answer "Don't Know" in order to avoid thinking about the question; they misinterpret the meaning of the question; they launch off on an irrelevant discussion; they contradict themselves--and in all these cases, the interviewer usually has to probe. The interviewer must be alert to incomplete or nonspecific answers. This requires an understanding of the over-all objective of each question, the precise thing it is trying to measure...ask, "Does that completely answer the question I just asked?"

(4) The interviewer should consider himself a reporter--record responses accurately and in the questions requiring a statement of opinion, quote the respondent directly without paraphrasing, summarizing, or changing the respondent's reply in any way.

APPENDIX B

(interviewer's name)
is an authorized interviewer for the city-wide survey, "How Do The Citizens of _____ View Their Public Schools?" being conducted as a research project of the public school administration and approved by the _____ School Board.

_____ Project Director

APPENDIX C

HOW DO THE CITIZENS OF _____
VIEW THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Citizen,

Thank you for cooperating in this interview. The following are the questions which the interviewer will ask you concerning your ideas about the public schools of _____:

1. How much do you know about the _____ Public Schools?

   _____quite a lot; _____ some; _____very little

2. Do you happen to know the name of the superintendent of schools?

   _____ yes; _____ no

3. Do you happen to know the name of the principal of the elementary school in your neighborhood?

   _____ yes; _____ no

4. Do you know the name of the principal of the high school attended by the children in your neighborhood?

   _____ yes; _____ no

5. Do you happen to know the name of the chairman of the school board?

   _____ yes; _____ no

6. Do you think there is a shortage of classroom space in the _____ Public Schools?

   _____ yes; _____ no

7. What is your guess as to the cost per child per year in the _____ Public Schools?

8. Are there many high school drop outs in _____?

   _____ quite a few; _____ almost none; _____ don't know

9. What percentage of the high school graduates from your area high school go on to college, do you think?

10. What do you think are the biggest problems with which the _____ Public Schools must deal?

11. Have you read any book in the last year that deals with education?

_____ yes; _____ no

12. What is the name of the book(s)?

13. During the last year, have you received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the _____ Public Schools are doing?

_____ yes; _____ no _____can't recall

14. During the last month have you read any articles in the newspapers about _____ Public Schools?

_____ yes; _____ no; _____ can't recall

15. Have you heard anything about _____ Public Schools on radio during this period?

_____ yes; _____ no; _____can't recall

16. How about television?

_____ yes; _____ no; _____can't recall

17. From your own personal viewpoint, what is the best source of information about _____ Public Schools?

18. Would you like to know more about the _____ Public Schools?

_____ yes; _____ no

19. How do you feel about the discipline in the _____ Public Schools--is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right?

20. Some people feel the schools do not go far enough in regulating the way boys and girls dress for school. Do you think there should be greater regulation of the way children dress for school, or less?

_____greater; _____less; _____all right as is; _____no opinion

21. Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?

_____ yes; _____ no

22. Do you think salaries in _____ for the teachers are too high, too low, or just about right?

23. Do you think teachers should be given automatic raises or should raises be given to some and not to others?

_____yes, automatic; _____no, not automatic; _____no opinion

24. How do you feel about teachers joining labor unions?

25. Do you think teachers should have the right to strike?

26. Do you think the _____ Public School system has a hard time getting good teachers?

27. Do you think the _____ Public School system has a hard time keeping good teachers?

28. Do you think there are some teachers in the _____ Public School system who should be dropped or fired? If yes, why?

29. From what you know, are teachers in _____ pretty well satisfied with their pay and working conditions or are they dissatisfied?

30. Are teachers in the _____ Public Schools paid more money, or less money, than teachers in other cities like Richmond?

31. How good a job do you think the _____ School Board does?

32. Do you think it is politically motivated? That is, do local politics play a part in decisions made by the board?

33. If someone asked you to be a school board member, would you be interested?

34. Why do you say that?

35. If you were to become a school board member, what changes in the schools would you favor?

36. Does the _____ School Board work hard to improve the quality of education?

37. Does the school board work hard to see that schools function efficiently and at the lowest cost?

38. Do you think the school buildings are more expensive than they need to be?

39. Do you think money is spent foolishly by the _____ Public School authorities and the _____ School Board?

40. Have you attended any lecture, any meeting, or any social occasion in any _____ school building during the last year?

41. Have you ever attended a meeting of the _____ School Board?

42. Do you belong to the PTA or a similar group?

43. If "no", and you have children in school, what are your reasons for not belonging to the PTA or a similar group?

44. If "yes", do you attend meetings regularly during the school year, or not?

45. If "not regularly", will you please tell why you do not attend regularly?

46. Suppose the _____ Public Schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEWER'S FORM

HOW DO THE CITIZENS OF _____
VIEW THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Interviewer:_____ Date of Interview_____

Address:_____ Household No._____

- -

"Hello, I am working on a city-wide survey to find out what people think of the _____ Public Schools. Your home was selected as one in which we would conduct an interview, if you are willing. May I come in and ask you a few questions to get your ideas?

My name is _____. This is my card authorizing me to interview people in the survey." (Show card)

Hand Respondent Copy of Questionnaire to Interviewee

"Here are the questions and possible answers--please follow as I read them. . . then, just tell me which answer is closest to your own idea."

Interviewer's Notes:

1. How much do you know about the _____ Public Schools?

/___/ (1) quite a lot; (2) some; (3) very little

2. Do you happen to know the name of the superintendent of schools?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

3. Do you happen to know the name of the principal of the elementary school in your neighborhood?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

4. Do you know the name of the principal of the high school attended by the children in your neighborhood?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

Interviewer's Notes:

5. Do you happen to know the name of the chairman of the school board?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) no answer

6. Do you think there is a shortage of classroom space in the _____ Public Schools?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) don't know/no ans.

7. What is your guess as to the cost per child per year in the _____ Public Schools?

/___/ (1) gave a figure; (2) don't know

8. Are there many high school drop outs in _____?

/___/ (1) quite a few; (2) almost none; (3) don't know; (4) commented: average, even one is too many

9. What percentage of the high school graduates from your area high school go on to college, do you think?

/___/ (1) gave a % figure; (2) don't know

10. What do you think are the biggest problems with which the _____ Public Schools must deal?

_____

Record all answers with key words, i.e., "finance."

11. Have you read any book in the last year that deals with education?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

12. What is the name of the book(s)?

_____

13. During the last year, have you received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the _____ Public Schools are doing?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) can't recall

Interviewer's Notes:

14. During the last month have you read any articles in the newspapers about _____ Public Schools?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) can't recall

15. Have you heard anything about _____ Public Schools on radio during this period?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) can't recall

16. How about television?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) can't recall

17. From your own personal viewpoint, what is the best source of information about schools?

_____

18. Would you like to know more about the _____ Public Schools?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

19. How do you feel about the discipline in the _____ Public Schools?

/___/ (1) too strict; (2) not strict enough; (3) just about right; (4) don't know/no ans.

20. Some people feel the schools do not go far enough in regulating the way boys and girls dress for school. Do you think there should be greater regulation of the way children dress for school, or less?

/___/ (1) greater; (2)less; (3) all right as is; (4) no opinion

21. Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

22. Do you think salaries in _____ for the teachers are too high, too low, or just about right?

/___/ (1) too high; (2) too low; (3) just about right; (4) don't know/no ans.

Interviewer's Notes:

23. Do you think teachers should be given automatic raises or should raises be given to some and not to others?

/___/ (1) yes, automatic; (2) no, not automatic; (3) no opinion

24. How do you feel about teachers joining labor unions?

_____

(Record answer, i.e., "Yes, if they want to, etc.")

25. Do you think the teachers should have the right to strike?

_____

(Record answer, i.e., "Yes, if justified, etc.")

26. Do you think the _____ Public School system has a hard time getting good teachers?

/___/ (1)yes; (2)no; (3)don't know/no ans.

27. Do you think the _____ Public School system has a hard time keeping good teachers?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) don't know/no ans.

28. Do you think there are some teachers in the _____ Public School system who should be dropped or fired? If "yes", why?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) don't know/no ans.

_____

(Record reason, if given)

29. From what you know, are teachers in _____ pretty well satisfied with their pay and working conditions or are they dissatisfied?

/___/ (1) satisfied; (2) dissatisfied; (3) don't know

30. Are teachers in the _____ Public Schools paid more money, or less money, than teachers in other comparable communities? (inner-cities like this one)

/___/ (1)more; (2) less; (3) about same; (4)don't know

Interviewer's Notes:

31. How good a job do you think the _____ School Board does?

/___/ (1) excellent; (2) about average; (3) fair; (4) poor; (5) don't know/no ans.

32. Do you think it is politically motivated? That is, do local politics play a part in decisions made by the board?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3)don't know/no ans.

33. If someone asked you to be a school board member, would you be interested?

/___/ (1)yes; (2)no; (3)don't know/no ans.

34. Why do you say that?

_____

35. If you were to become a school board member, what changes in the schools would you favor?

_____

36. Does the _____ School Board work hard to improve the quality of education?

/___/ (1)yes; (2) no; (3) don't know/no ans.

37. Does the school board work hard to see that the schools function efficiently and at the lowest cost?

/___/ (1)yes; (2)no; (3) don't know/no ans.

38. Do you think that school buildings are more expensive than they need to be?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no; (3) don't know/no ans.

_____
(Record any comments)

39. Do you think money is spent foolishly by the _____ Public School authorities and the _____ School Board?

/___/ (1)yes; (2)no; (3)don't know/no ans.

Interviewer's Notes:

40. Have you attended any lecture, any meeting, or any social occasion in any _____ school building during the last year?

/___/ (1)yes; (2) no; (3) no answer

41. Have you ever attended a meeting of the _____ School Board?

/___/ (1)yes; (2) no; (3) no answer

42. Do you belong to the PTA or a similar group?

/___/ (1) yes; (2) no

43. If "no" and you have children in school, what are your reasons for not belonging to the PTA or a similar group?

_____
(Record answer) (Check if no children____)

44. If "yes", do you attend meetings regularly during the school year, or not?

/___/ (1)regularly; (2) not regularly; (3) no ans.

45. If "not regularly," will you please tell me why you do not attend regularly?

_____

46. Suppose the _____ Public Schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

/___/ (1)for; (2)against; (3) don't know/no ans.

47. Some people say that the federal government should pay all of the cost of a college education. Others believe that most of the costs should continue to be paid, as now, by parents and students. Which would you favor?

_____

INTERVIEWER: "This concludes the questions about the schools. May I ask you a few questions about yourself?"

/___/ 1. Would you tell me the kind of business or industry you (or the head of your household) works in and the kind of work you do?

_____

/___/ 2. What was the last grade or class you completed in school?

_____

/___/ 3. Do you have children in school? If so, which school(s)?

_____

/___/ 4. Into which age bracket would you fall?

_____21-29 years; _____30-49 years; _____50 & over

5. (Showing card) Would you please give me the letter of the group on the card which best represents the total annual income, before taxes, of all of the members of your immediate family living in your household?

/___/ /___/ /___/ /___/
M F W N

INTERVIEWER: "This completes the information asked for in the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation, etc."